

Ditchley
CH-698
Wayside
Private

1872

Found near the village of Wayside, Ditchley is composed of a 100 acre farm anchored by a 19th century center gable I-house. The dwelling has a typical center-passage plan and is distinguished by its relatively rare local expression of Italianate-inspired adornments including dentil molding at the cornice and arched, double front doors at the principal entrance. The farmhouse has a characteristic two-story rear service wing. A pyramidal roof smokehouse and tobacco barn also share the site and were likely built at the time that the dwelling was erected. Set among flat, open cultivated fields are two additional barns, an equipment shed and a stripping shed dating from the early to mid-20th century.

Established by Philip Ashton L. Contee around 1872 on Lot No. 1 of Elmwood, Ditchley remained in the Contee family until 1926. A veteran of the Civil War, P.A.L. Contee (1841-1899) served in the First Maryland Confederate Artillery under Major William Fendlay Dement. Later, he was active in local politics and was elected County Commissioner in 1879 and Judge of Elections in 1884.

7. Description

Inventory No. CH-698

Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Located at the southwest corner of Rock Point Road and Morgantown Road, Ditchley is now composed of a 104 acre farm anchored by a 19th century I-house with Italianate details and a decorative center gable. Originally consisting of over 200 acres, the farm was established in 1872 when the dwelling, smokehouse and one of the tobacco barns are believed to have been erected. The farm lies in the Cobb Neck peninsula between the Potomac and Wicomico Rivers. Although partially wooded a large portion of the land surrounding the house and along the road is flat, open and currently under cultivation. Two 20th century tobacco barns, a stripping shed and an equipment shed add to the rural setting. A non-contributing concrete block shed also shares the site.

EXTERIOR

Two stories in height, five bays in width and one room deep, the dwelling includes an original two story rear ell. The frame rests on a continuous brick foundation and is covered with beveled "German" siding. During the second half of the 20th century the siding was partially re-clad with brick-tex. The dwelling has a metal roof pierced by two large interior chimneys with corbelled caps on the main block, and a smaller chimney stack in the rear ell. The full width entrance porch, resting on a concrete block foundation, has a shed roof that is supported by six turned posts. Square railings enclose the wood floor. The rear ell addition also rests on a concrete block foundation. The house retains much of its original form with the exception of a porch and ell addition to the service wing in the early to mid- 20th century.

The symmetrical façade faces northeast and is dominated by a relatively elaborate double entrance door with sidelights and a 6-light transom. Each door is adorned with typical Italianate arched molding. Flanking the entrance door are four large original 4/4 light windows. The second story contains five similar but smaller 4/4 windows. Above the center bay is a round, 4-light window situated in the decorative gable. Large block-like applied dentils decorate the wide cornice.

INTERIOR

The interior has a typical I-house plan with a center hall flanked by rooms on either side. The stair, accentuated with a large newel, stands on the northwest wall adjoining the large formal room that was probably used as a dining room. Here, a closet is found under the stairs. On the opposite side of the centered hall is the parlor. Each room includes a fireplace on the rear or southwest wall. The dining room, currently painted a vivid apricot color, shows evidence of its original sanded paint finish. Accessible from the dining room is a hallway leading into the kitchen ell. Off this hallway is a heated room which was used as a kitchen in the late 20th century. Beyond this is a large kitchen that opens onto a farm porch on the southeast corner. At a later date, an addition was constructed to house a bathroom on the opposite side of the service hall, closing in the rear entry hall doorway of the main block. The second story largely mirrors the first with two bedrooms in the main block and three partitioned rooms in the rear wing. Four-panel doors are found throughout and are framed with wide, Victorian trim.

OUTBUILDINGS

A pyramidal roof smokehouse, likely contemporary with the dwelling, stands directly beyond the kitchen's southeast corner. A farm lane dividing flat cultivated fields connects the dwelling with the outbuildings to the southeast. The earliest of these outbuildings is a frame tobacco barn that is rectangular in form with a gable roof. This barn has a stone pier foundation and a narrow door on the gable end. New vertical board siding has been added to the exterior and an addition has been attached to the eastern gable-end.

Two additional barns and a stripping shed appear on the property to the south including an early 20th century gable roof tobacco barn with a concrete block foundation and a gambrel roof tobacco barn dating from the mid-20th century. Both have vertical board siding and centered isles running along the roof axis. The tobacco stripping shed stands near the southernmost corner of the gable-roof tobacco barn. The equipment shed is a rectangular frame structure with a metal roof. The frame rests on a concrete block piers foundation.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No CH-698

Name Ditchley

Continuation Sheet

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At Ditchley, the rural landscape is well defined with a long, rigidly straight farm lane at a right angle from the main road that leads directly to the dwelling. The lane is divided by large, open cultivated fields on either side of the lane. In front of the dwelling the lane turns sharply to the southeast and winds around connecting fields and outbuildings to the rear of the main house. All outbuildings are located along the farm lane.

8. Significance

Inventory No. CH-698

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history	
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime industry	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

Specific dates 1872

Architect/Builder Unknown

Construction dates 1872

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance reports, complete evaluation on a DOE Form - see manual.)

Believed to have been built around 1872 for Philip Ashton L. Contee, Ditchley is one of a small number of Charles County farmsteads established in the decades after the Civil War. The dwelling is a relatively unusual example of vernacular architecture inspired by the Italianate style. Equally significant is the well preserved rural landscape that is representative of late 19th century farmsteads throughout the county.

The Italianate style enjoyed nationwide popularity just before the Civil War although variations persisted well into the Victorian Era. Most typical elements seen locally include wide cornices adorned with brackets or dentils, and arched doorways. Ditchley also features an early example of a decorative center gable on the façade. Appearing after the Civil War, the center gable adorned with a distinctive window became a standard feature of I-house construction in Charles County well into the 20th century.

Following the Civil War, Charles County suffered the same fate as most of the southern states. The basis of the economy, slave labor, was gone. While planters continued to rely heavily on tobacco cultivation, slave labor was replaced with various systems of tenancy or wage labor. Due to dwindling profits, credit collapsed and many planters fell deep into debt. In addition, Federal taxes levied by the "carpet-bag" government threatened landowners with the loss of their land. This lack of capital made it difficult for farmers to branch out into other agricultural and commercial pursuits.

The post-war period also marked the end of large farms. In 1870 there were 545 farms in Charles County. By the turn of the century, that number had more than tripled to 1900 farms. Farm size continually decreased as large farms, containing over 500 acres, were divided. The most dramatic increase was seen in the number of farms under fifty acres, which more than doubled between 361 farms in 1880 and 728 farms in 1920.

In 1872 Sallie Contee sold to Philip Ashton L. Contee and his wife Bettie Contee, Lot No. 1 of Elmwood which included 210 1/4 acres. By 1900 Philip A.L. Contee had died and the farm "commonly called Ditchley" was purchased outright at public auction by his widow Ellen Blanche Contee. She retained Ditchley for the next quarter century until it was sold to Franz and Annie Friedrich in 1926. Five years later it was transferred to Otto T. Friedrich. Ditchley changed hands several more times before being purchased by the Simms family in 1951.

Although little is currently known about Philip Ashton Contee (1841-c.1899), available published material indicates that he was veteran of the Civil War. Like most Charles Countians Contee was a staunch Confederate and at the age of twenty enlisted in the First Maryland Artillery under Major William Fendley Dement. Also active in local politics, in 1879 Contee was elected County Commissioner, and in 1884, a Judge of Elections. After the Civil War he married his first wife Bettie, with whom he had two children. After 1870, Bettie died and by 1883 Contee had remarried Ellen Blanche Neale the daughter of the late Henry A. Neale.(1)

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Immediately following Contee's death in 1899 an extensive inventory of his personal property was recorded indicating that the farm was extensively cultivating both tobacco and wheat. The tobacco crop was valued at \$300.00 and wheat, although equal in acreage, was valued at a meager \$77.00. To a lesser extent, corn was grown, totaling 85 bushels valued at \$70. Livestock was also a part of the farm including 12 pigs, 17 old sheep, 6 lambs, 2 yearlings, an ox, a cow and a heifer along with three horses. The inventory also includes a room by room inventory of the farmhouse, revealing how the domestic space was both furnished and used. The first floor included a parlor, dining room, pantry and kitchen. The dining room held the most expensive furnishing including the home's most highly valued piece of furniture, the sideboard. There were a total of five bedrooms on the second floor ranging from the sparse containing only a bedstead, bureau, dressing able and bed linens, to the elaborate.

Overall, Ditchely retains a well preserved rural landscape of open cultivated fields interrupted with loosely grouped outbuildings that are connected by a winding farm lane. Although little survives to reflect the use of livestock on the farm, the importance of tobacco as the principal cash crop well into the 20th century and its impact on the landscape are clearly reflected at Ditchley.

ENDNOTES

(1) Wearmouth, Robereta. Extracts of the Port Tobacco Times.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. CH-698

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 104

Acreage of historical setting 210

Quadrangle name Colonial Beach North

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

"Ditchley" is associated with Charles County Property Tax Map 83, Parcel 47.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cathy Currey/Historic Sites Surveyor

organization Charles County Planning Dept.

date 8/6/01

street and number 200 Baltimore Street

telephone 301-396-5815

city or town LaPlata

state MD zip code 20646

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville MD 21032
410-514-7600

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

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Section 8 Page 1

Ditchley

name of property

Charles County, MD

county and state

Chain of title:

January 21, 1988	William E. Simms, representative of the estate of Lorraine S. Wilmer to William Elliot Simms. Parcels a-f Parcel C 1270:087
December 8, 1976	Lorraine S. Wilmer, for the William L. Simms Jr. estate to Lorraine S. Wilmer and William E. Simms, children and heirs of William L. Simms. Several parcels. 477:179
April 4, 1951	Leonard and Mary Boarman to William L. and Annie G. Simms. 95:206
June 15, 1949	Oscar P. Bridgett to Leonard and Mary Boarman Second- woodland Part of "Ditchley" from Otto T. Frederick 73/437 Third-from Otto T. Frederick et al 73/439 and Edward J. Edelen 73:441 Buildings and improvements. 88:454
January 28, 1941	Otto T. and Clara R. Friedrich to Oscar P. Bridgett 45:437, 439, 441
June 29, 1931	Franz Friedrich to Otto T. Friedrich 53:546
May 20, 1926	Ellen Blanche Contee, now of Brooklyn New York to Franz and Annie Friedrich, of Prince Georges County. Property surveyed at this time. 213 acres known as "Ditchley" 45:359
January 13, 1900	Sold at public auction following a decree from the Circuit Court, acting as Court of Equity. Ellen Blanche Contee, widow of Philip A.L. Contee purchased the property, including 210 acres more or less formerly known as "Ditchley", with improvements. BGS 10:480
January 16, 1872	Sallie K. Contee to Philip A.L. and Bettie Contee. Lot No. 1 of Elmwood Farm as divided by the commissioners. 1 st 210 1/4 acres ; 2 nd 74 3/4 acres GAH 3:334

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET

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Section 9 Page 1

Ditchley

name of property

Charles County, Maryland

county and state

Major Bibliographic References:

Brown, Jack D., et al. Charles County, Maryland, A History. Charles County Bicentennial Committee, 1976.

Charles County Land Records, Charles County Courthouse, La Plata, Maryland.

Klapthor, Margaret Brown. The History of Charles County, Maryland. La Plata, MD: Charles County Tercentenary, Inc., 1958.

RESOURCE SKETCH MAP

Date: 7/01

North arrow:



Name: DITCHLEY

Address: 13205 ROCK POINT ROAD

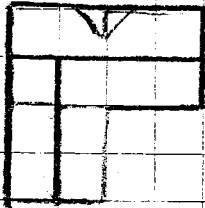
CH - 698

Charles County, Maryland

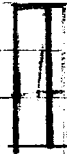
WAYSIDE

☒ Vicinity

Block
shed



SMOKEHOUSE

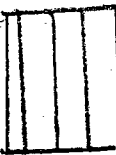


EQUIPMENT SHED



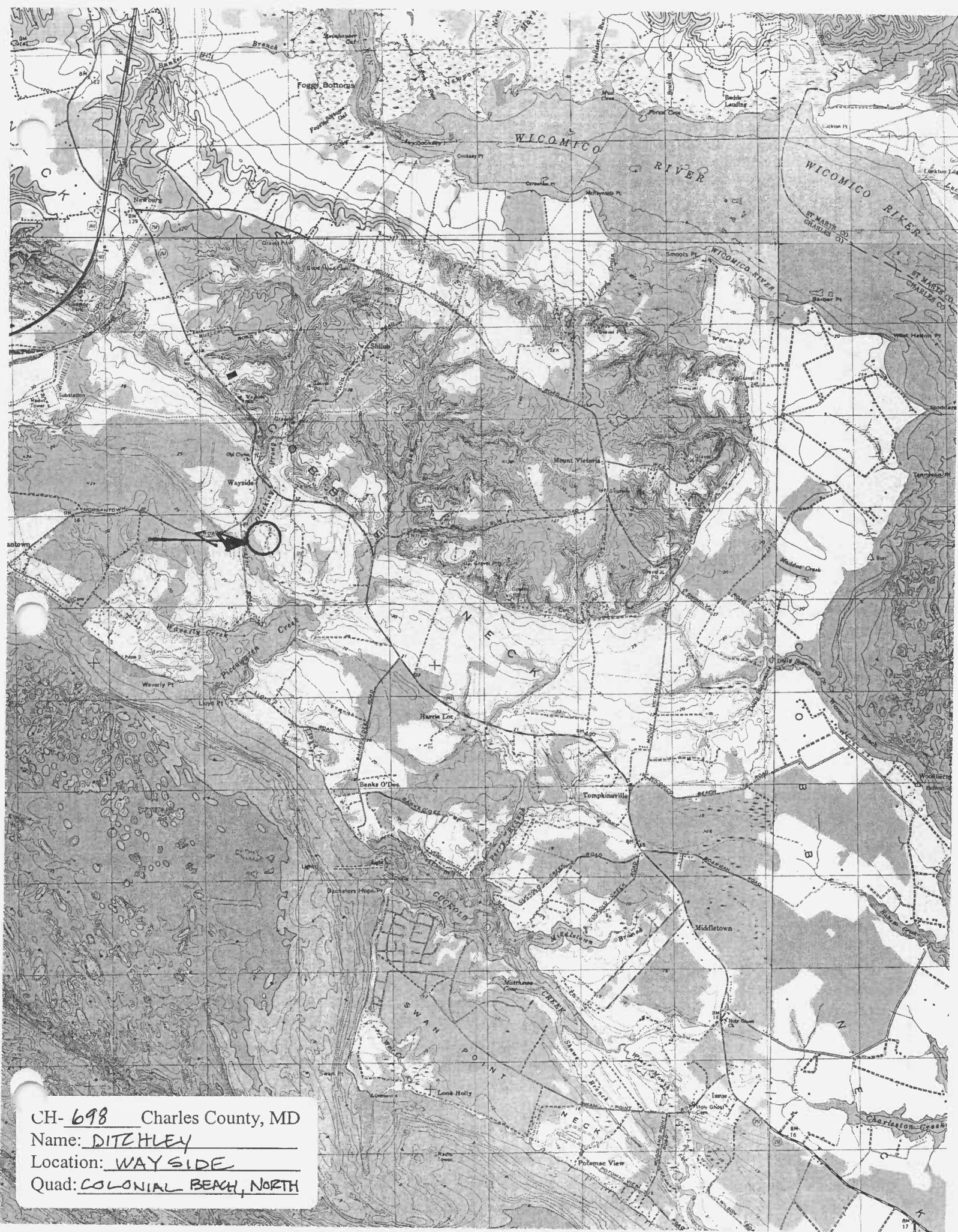
TOBACCO
BARN #1

TOBACCO BARN #2



TOBACCO
BARN
#3

Not drawn to scale



CH- 698 Charles County, MD
Name: DITCHLEY
Location: WAYSIDE
Quad: COLONIAL BEACH, NORTH







CH ~~7/01~~ LTA
DITCHEY
CHARLES CO, MD
C. DITCHEY

7/01
MIS-ALDO
LOOKING SW
JULY





CH- ~~2~~ 693

DITMLEY

CHARLES CO, MD

C PURDY

7/01

NO SHPS

NEWEL, BOOR & TRIM

5 OF 6



CH-618

DITCHLEY

CHAS S. D. AND

C. D. D. AND

7101

NO EXPO

~~WATER PUMP STATION~~

STAIR DETAIL

6 OF 6